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NAPOLEON

NAPOLEON

AN ESSAY BY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

TOGETHER WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF
FIVE ORIGINAL SKETCHES
BY THE AUTHOR

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1915

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

D. B. UPDIKE THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON, U.S.A.

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NO. 2.

FOREWORD

The original sketches of Napoleon from which these reproductions are made came into my possession some years ago and are probably of the period when Mr. Thackeray wrote the "Essay on Napoleon."

On acquiring the manuscript of this essay, it seemed appropriate, at this particular time, that I should have both reproduced for my friends, — a token of my sincere appreciation of their kindnesses shown to me from time to time, and of the associations that have afforded me such pleasure and happiness.

My thanks are due to Mr. Charles E. Lauriat, Jr., for his untiring interest and for obtaining the manuscript and letters from Lady Ritchie; also to Mr. Updike for his care and guiding hand in preparing this little volume.

W. B. O. F.

645 *Fifth Avenue, New York*
March, 1915

9 *St. Leonard's Terrace,*
Chelsea, S.W.
Nov. 21.

I have been deeply interested re-reading the MSS. and I send you back the notes amplified.

I think you ought to publish this Napoleon MSS. *NOW;* It seems so fitted to this terrible time—so noble, so terrible—may peace be with us!

Yours very truly,

ANNE RITCHIE.

P.S. My son has been ill, but he is able to drill his men and to work at the Depot in Leicester. My nephew is badly wounded—another nephew is at the front—my friends are killed—but thank God they have done noble duty, and are doing it.

9, *St. Leonard's Terrace*,
Chelsea, S.W.

These unpublished notes for an Essay on Napoleon must have been written by my Father either in 1836 when he was a news-paper correspondent in Paris, or as I am now inclined to think later on when in 1842 & the following years he was contemplating a life of Talleyrand and publishing articles in Fraser and other Magazines.

With what a different response one now reads this noble expression of feeling, from that with which in July last—only five months ago—I wrote the short preceding note at the request of Mr. Lauriat. How the truth and generous fire of the whole goes to one's heart. He—my Father—would not have loved Peace as he did if he had not kindled, & as I can remember so well, too generous valour and noble patriotic deeds over which I have heard him exclaim in sympathy and pride.

I have often thought of late what would my Father have said about this cruel war? *THIS* is what he would have said, only changing the terrible indictment of hatred & unrighteous attack from the French to the German Nation.

ANNE RITCHIE.

November 21, 1914.

THE MANUSCRIPT

~~Hundred battles, fought by twenty years of war, have gone to obliterate~~

the historic glamour from the once unconquerable Napoleon, the twenty peaceful years which have followed his downfall, and above all the punishment which overtook his ambition and laid low his pride, have done much to obliterate in the minds of all the peoples of Europe, the hatred with which they once regarded him, and the troops he led. But those who can remember the feelings of a score of years back, will recollect with what a fiery unanimity, all the ~~last~~ European nations marshalled together to resist their common enemy, and to crush by the force of their union the prodigious genius which had wrought so much ill upon each. As the British who ~~had~~ had ~~liberated~~ Spain and Portugal from the grasp of his best generals, carried their triumphant war into the territory of France, the northern nations similarly victorious in the gigantic combats of Leipzig and Dresden, ~~pursued~~ their advance here across the Rhine, followed and fought the great warrior until he could fight no more. ~~He threw from his hand the sword from his hand~~ and ~~resigning~~ his genius and his misfortunes consigned them to an honourable exile.

We all know how he returned from his exile, ~~but to be vanquished~~ and how it once more became necessary for Europe to arm ~~again~~, and how ~~then~~ then the sword from his hand, and dark the crown from his head, and of ever there was a cause, ~~which~~ since the time of the crusades, ~~which~~ united the ~~Christendom~~ together, it was that ~~which~~ ~~assembled~~ the Allies together in 1815, and ~~continued~~ for ever the hopes & forces of Napoleon.

In our own country the feeling against him was strong: that we had

to depart in insult to avenge wrongs as the other European Powers had received from him, and resumed as was our resistance to the enemy, it was little compared with the hatred felt by the Northern countries against them. Especially their oppressor.

In Germany the crusade against Napoleon became was not merely a national cause, adopted by Princes and Governments, but became to be the cause of each individual man, who had for scarcely one heart in his own person or that of some one near & dear to him, has suffered wrong & indignity at the hands of the French invaders, and for peaceful men were known to take the musket, and for peaceful citizens to send away their only boy to join the forces and bidding them to strike them like mad dogs the fury the Imperial Tyrant.

Such the great events, these are facts, such the great work that Prussian this story has to do: We have only to tell of a few humble people whom fate have bound up with the great events that then took place.

And it must scarcely be their hope, for but that the subject can't be thoroughly exhausted) - if it is not only the anxieties and excitements of the day and of the actual participators of the war which people have to fear: but the accursed legacy of hatred which it leaves behind it: and which (the total [illegible] it brings with it) obstructs progress and freedom, whereas some enterprise and honest thought, under the effects of the long ago of the quarrel is dead to the nations, and the survivors are in their theatre. We have conquered Napoleon - it is very well. Some few hundreds of old men have a red ribbon for that service, and a little medal hanging to it: but the living fury of Latred is not dead yet, and for five and twenty years past has interposed a thousand times between the benefits of two nations were in question - blackening with suspicion every honest attempt at conciliation, and thwarting every kindly simple plan of mutual interest. - [illegible] the old Imperial party have always existed, and have scarcely ever been more numerous than the old Bourbon party. Between both as, the falsity of hatred was nearly as hard to [illegible] for both, but it would be well, of the French cause be brought to the [illegible] who [illegible] have been the chief propagators of the anti-English cry. - Every [illegible] takes it up as he goes into Opposition - and has repeated with the utmost confidence [illegible] that it has got to be called 'National' hate. That is what the thiers calls her [illegible] Thiers, Barrot, Berryer each addresses himself to the public and appeals to what is called the National feeling - National is the word - for there is [illegible] any nation should be so ungenerous as to hate a National generosity,

On marble slabs in the Cathedral Church of Taunton, the reader has very likely seen the catalogues of the names of the English officers who died there - The names of the private men, who fell upon that day and their fellow duty in the field as well, are not mentioned: it has thought either that their humble services did not merit, ~~either~~ living or dead be deemed worthy with gentlemen bearing the Majesty's commission, or that the cost of marble would be too great: - in fact a pyramid would scarcely have been big enough to ~~receive~~ chronicle the names of their fellow fellows.

If however some obituary of the dead could be kept of ~~every~~ army and regiment: it would form a wholesome and instructive though not perhaps agreeable reading, and might (please God) every year with less & less cost be published at no very great charges as a supplement to the Gazette. Leaving out the cause of the battle & their issue, the compiler should state simply the name and age of the slain soldier, the manner of wound of wh. he died, the name of his near relations and birth place. "John Thompson. 24. received a musket ball in the thigh at Toulouse. Died amputation same day: died of the operation: born at Taunton in Somerset - only son of John Thompson now ~~alive~~ resident there. Has left a widow & three children" - A very common imagination could supply from this outline the necessary details - the way in wh. John Thompson falls at ~~Victor cease and a hurrah~~ the front a height as wh. some Englishman exchanging his hurrah for a curse as he drops and the column marches over him, - the agonies of his wound as he lies on the field - the agonies of the operation and the fever that death subsequent to it - the agonies of his mother the widow, of his wife the widow too; the woes of the children and possibly the cunning beggary of the whole family, might all be very easily fourthrough to the minds, and ~~even~~ at last in common journeys ~~to~~ the presented to it, as well as that picture of triumphs and ~~to-deums~~, knighthoods, gun-firing & parliamentary gratitude, with which the successful ~~warriors~~ of some thousands of more or less lucky John Thompsons

Struggles of this nature, are especially of late years much more common in England than when the ~~Duke~~ engaged thirty years since in the French war. But with our neighbours the warlike spirit seems to be still almost as strong as ever: at least it is so strong that every demagogue in his turn has but to cry revenge and he finds half a million of echoes to his cry: and since the defeat of the Empire, it has been the cowardly Tactic of every party in opposition to raise this ~~popular~~ triumphal outcry in its own favour.

THE victories gained over the once unconquerable Napoleon, the twenty peaceful years which have followed his downfal, and above all the punishment which overtook his ambition and laid low his pride, have done much to obliterate in the minds of all the people of Europe, the hatred with which they once regarded him, and the troops he led. But those who can remember the feelings of a score of years back, will recollect with what a fiery unanimity, all the European nations marshalled together to resist their common enemy, and to crush by the force of their union the prodigious Genius who had wrought so much ill upon each. As the British who had wrested Spain and Portugal from the grasp of his best generals, carried their triumphant war into the territory of France, the northern nations similarly victorious in the gigantic combats of Leipzig and Dresden, poured their immense horde across the Rhine, followed and fought the great Warrior until he could fight no more, and still respecting his genius and misfortunes consigned him to an honorable exile.

We all know how he returned from his exile, and how it once more became necessary for Europe to arm, and tear the sword from his hand, and dash the crown from his head; and if ever there was a cause, which since the time of the crusades,

united all Christendom together, it was that which assembled the Allies in 1815, and overthrew for ever the hopes and power of Napoleon.

In our own country the feeling against him was strong: but we had no defeats or insults to avenge, such as all other European Powers had received from him, and vehement as was our resistance to our enemy, it was little compared with the hatred felt by the Northern countries against the oppressor.

In Germany especially the crusade against Napoleon was not merely a national cause, adopted by Princes and Governments, but seemed to be the cause of each individual man, for scarcely one but in his own person or that of some one near and dear to him, had suffered wrong and indignity at the hands of the French invader, and peaceful men were known to take the musket, and poor widows to send away their only sons bidding them to stake their lives for the putting down the General Tyrant.

With the great interests then at stake, this story has little to do: we have only to tell of a few humble people whom fate has bound up with the great events that then took place.

And (it need scarcely be said here, but that the subject can't

be too strongly or too often urged)—it is not only the ruin and wretchedness of the day and of the actual participators of the war which people have to fear: but the brutal prejudices it brings with it, the accursed legacy of hatred which it leaves behind it: and which obstruct progress and freedom, and mar and kill wholesome enterprize and honest thought, for long ages after the quarrel is said to be ended, and the swords are in their sheaths. We have conquered Napoleon—it is very well. Some few hundreds of old men still are alive and wear a red ribbon for that service, and a little medal hanging to it: but the fury of hatred is not dead yet, and for five and twenty years past has interposed a thousand times when the benefits of the two nations were in question—blackening with suspicion every honest attempt at conciliation, and thwarting every kindly simple plan of mutual interest. [With the old Imperial party, now almost extinct, and scarcely more numerous than the old Waterloo medal-wearers with us, the feeling of hatred was manly at least and therefore pardonable, but it would be well, if the French could be brought to see who else have been the chief propagators of the Anti-English cry. Every man takes it up as he goes into opposition: Thiers, Barrot, Berryer each addresses himself to the public and appeals to what is

called the national feeling—national is the word—for shame that any nation should be so ungenerous as to make hatred a national question.]

On marble slabs, in the humble little church of Waterloo, the reader has very likely seen the catalogue of the names of the English officers who died there. The names of the private men, who fell upon that day and did their duty to the full as well, are not mentioned; it was thought either that such humble persons did not merit, living or dead to keep company with gentlemen bearing His Majesty's commission, or that the cost of marble would be too great:—in fact a pyramid would scarcely have been big enough to chronicle the names of these poor fellows.

If however some obituary of the kind could be kept of armies and regiments: it would form wholesome and instructive though not perhaps agreeable reading, and might (please God every year with less and less cost) be published at no very great charges as a Supplement to the Gazette. Leaving out the cause of the battles and their issue, the compiler should state simply the name and age of the slain soldier, the manner of wound of which he died, the names of his near relatives, and

birth place. "John Thompson. 24. received a musket ball in the thigh at Tezna. limb amputated same day: died of the operation: born at Taunton in Somersetshire—only son of Jane Thompson now resident there. Has left a widow and three children." A very common imagination could supply from this outline the necessary details—the way in which John Thompson feels as he storms a height on which some Afghans are mustered,—exchanging his hurrah for a curse as he drops and the column marches over him,—the agonies of his wound as he lies on the field—the agonies of the operation and the fever and death subsequent to it—the agonies of his mother the widow, of his wife the widow too; the wonder of the children and possibly the ensuing beggary of the whole family, might all be very easily pourtrayed to the mind, and thereto at least in common fairness be presented to it, as well as that picture of triumphs and *te-deums*, knighthoods, gun-firing, and parliamentary gratitude, which follow upon the successful exertions of some thousands of more or less lucky John Thompsons.

Thoughts of this nature, are especially of late much more common in England than when we were engaged thirty years since in the French war, but with our neighbours the warlike spirit seems to be still almost as strong as ever: at least it is

so strong that every demagogue in his turn has but to cry revenge and he finds half a million of echoes to his cry: and since the defeats of the Empire, it has been the cowardly tactics of every party in opposition to raise this shameful outcry in its own favor.

FIVE ORIGINAL SKETCHES
BY THACKERAY

109 *St. George's Sq.*,
April 6

Dear Sir

My father drew the pictures of Napoleon somewhere about 1852 in Young Street. He must have been thinking of writing a lecture on the early Caricaturists but he never carried it out.

Yours truly,

ANNE RITCHIE.

The original Sketch measures $11^{6}/_{8}$ *by* $17^{1}/_{2}$ *inches*

The original Sketch measures $11\frac{6}{8}$ by $17\frac{1}{8}$ inches

BONEY.

The original Sketch measures $6^{3}/_{8}$ *by* $11^{3}/_{8}$ *inches*

The original sketch measures $6\frac{3}{8}$ by $11\frac{3}{8}$ inches

The original Sketch measures $6\frac{1}{4}$ *by* $7\frac{1}{4}$ *inches*

The original Sketch measures 6 1/4 by 7 1/4 inches

The original Sketch measures $4^{7}/_{8}$ *by* $6^{13}/_{16}$ *inches*

The original Sketch measures $4\frac{7}{8}$ by $6\frac{13}{16}$ inches

The original Sketch measures $5^{3}/_{4}$ by $7^{3}/_{4}$ inches

The original sketch measures $3\frac{3}{4}$ by $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Seventy-five copies of this book were printed by D. B. Updike
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